(a) whether any talks were held recently with the neighboring countries on increase in smuggling activities across the border;

(b) if so, the outcome of the talks held; and

(c) the details of the steps agreed to by the Governments of the neighboring countries to check smuggling activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c): The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[*English*]

Japanese Assistance for Projects in Karnataka

1715. SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has approached the Union Government to pose some projects for financial aid package from OECF, Japan;

(b) if so, the projects for which the agreement has been reached; and

(c) the amount released for each of these projects so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a): Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c): Government of Japan have extended a Loan Assistance of Yen 16,050 million for CLUMP project of Karnataka Government. Loan Agreement in this regard was signed on 13.6.1991.

Another project of Karnataka, namely 'Karnataka Tourism Project' which was not picked up by Government of Japan in earlier two years, has again been posed for 1992 OECF Loan Package. The decision of the Government of Japan for this project will be announced at the Aid-India Consortium meeting to be held in May, 1992.

[*Translation*]

Incentives on Export of Carpets

1716. SHRI RAM NIHOR RAI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have withdrawn the incentives being given to the carpet manufacturers at present on the export of carpets;

(b) whether Government propose to formulate any scheme for promoting the export of carpets; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: (a) As a general policy, export incentives viz. cash compensatory support and Exim-scrips have been withdrawn for all exportable items which include carpets. However, the scheme of duty draw-back, and import of raw wool at concessional rate of duty and pre-shipment credit for 180 days would continue to be applicable to the carpet exports.

(b) and (c) For promoting the export of handknotted carpets abroad, the following steps have been proposed to be taken during 1992-93:

(1) To expose Indian Carpets by participating in the following International Fairs:-

(a) Domotex International Trade Fair, Hannover(Germany).

(b) He imtextil Asia Fair, Tokyo, Japan.

(2) To organise a Buyer-Seller-Meet at New Delhi.

(3) To invite expert/technical delegation from abroad.

(4) To undertake export publicity in the leading foreign Newspapers/magazines.

(5) To promote the annual All India Carpet Trade Fair.

Take over of New Sick Textile Mills in Bihar

1717. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to take over some new sick textile mills in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Takeover by the Government or nationalisation of sick mills does not provide solution to the problem of sickness and the Government would not as a rule, intervene in such cases.

Skirmishes on Indo-Pak Border

1718. SHRI MUMTAZ ANSARI: Will the Minister of DEFANCE be pleased to state:

(a) number of skirmishes which took place on Indo-Pak border during the last three months;

(b) the extent of loss of life and property;

(c) whether the Government have lodged any protest in this regard with Pakistan;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) While there have been no "skirmishes" along the Indo-Pak border during the last three months, intermittent exchange of fire along the line of Control is a recurring phenomenon. There were 331 firing incidents along the Line of Control and 10 incidents of firing between the Pak Rangers and the BSF in the Amritsar Sector of the International Border during this period.

(b) There has been no loss of property nor any civilian casualties during the exchange of fire. The Indian troops have suffered some casualties. It will not be desirable to disclose the details.

(c) to (e): The Directors General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan, through Weekly telephonic contacts, have made efforts to de-escalate the situation along the Line of Control. Firing incidents along the International Border are taken up in Flag Meetings between the BSF and their Pak counterparts.

Bank Deposits and Investments in Hilly Areas of Uttar Pradesh

1719. SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: